



Suicide Strategies That May Save a Life

Suicide Intervention Strategies That May Save a Life

If you suspect that someone is considering suicide, it is critical you take the following actions. You may save a life.

1. Ask the person, “Are you thinking about killing yourself?”

It is a myth that you will plant the idea in someone’s head. If a person has been thinking of suicide, he/she will be relieved and grateful that you were willing to be so open and nonjudgmental. It shows the person you truly care and take him/her seriously. Stay calm, but always take thoughts of or plans for suicide seriously.

2. If yes, "Do you have a plan?"

If “yes” you will want to know the plan and if the equipment or drugs are available and accessible.

3. Ask “Do you have access to your method?” (For example, is there access to a gun, rope, medication, sharp knives, etc.).

4. Next you should ask “When will you do it?” (Today, Next week?)

Asking this question will give you an idea if the person is in immediate danger. If you feel that the threat is imminent, do not leave the person alone! A suicidal person must see a doctor or psychiatrist immediately. You may have to take him/her to the nearest hospital emergency room or call 911.

5. Never keep a plan for suicide a secret.

Don’t worry about breaking a bond of friendship at this point. Friendships can be fixed. And never call a person’s bluff, or try to minimize the problems by telling the person he or she has everything to live for or how hurt the family would be. This will only increase feelings of guilt and hopelessness. The person needs to be reassured that help is available and that suicidal feelings are temporary. There is medical help to treat depression and other illnesses that cause suicidal feelings.

4. Show you care.

If you feel the person isn’t in immediate danger, you can say things like, “I understand that you are in pain, and that you want the pain to stop”, and “I care about you and will do my best to help you.” Then follow through. Help find a doctor or a mental health professional. Be by the person’s side when that first phone call is made, or go along on the first appointment. It’s not a good idea to leave it up to a person to get help on his own. A supportive person can mean so much to someone who’s in pain.